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What I Want in My Physician

As a post-menopausal woman with experience as the patient of excellent doctors, I know what I want from you.

Excellent credentials, experience, reputation, and attitude. Whenever possible, I choose the personal physicians of other physicians and their families; this way, I know I am getting superb care. I do not mind paying more for a fine physician because I believe in financial reward for excellence. I will feel better about our relationship, however, if I know your real reward comes from healing your patients rather than from building your stock portfolio.

Absolute trust and respect. This must work both ways. Please take me seriously. Don't scoff at my fears or odd symptoms. Because I want to trust you to work with and for me, I will follow your advice and keep you informed when something you recommend does not seem to be working well. I want the truth—always—and will always tell you the truth.

Effective use of our time. I do not want to be kept waiting for more than 20 minutes. I am busy too; when I am kept waiting, others who may be waiting for me are inconvenienced. If there are always half-hour to hour delays in your office, I may stop being your patient.

Your undivided attention. Do not be distracted, evasive, or bored when I am in your examining room or office. I come to you because you know things I do not but do not try to talk me out of my symptoms. Do not prescribe drugs, treatments, or operative procedures I do not need, please find out what other drugs I may be taking, do not assume I know what I should not eat or drink with a drug you prescribe, and tell me about the possible side effects.

—CAROL MINDEY

Ms Mindey works in the Department of Occupational Health at Pacific Presbyterian Medical Center, San Francisco, and is the author of *The Divorced Mother* (McGraw Hill Book Company, New York, 1970).